

CARD ALPHA

ISSUE ONE



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'Last Scintilla'

EDITORIAL

CARD ALPHA

ISSUE ONE

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Welcome to the first issue of Card Alpha, an online magazine for new poetry. As editor, I took the decision to begin this project in order to bring together some of the most exciting and ground-breaking poetic works being produced by both emerging and established poets in the UK and around the world today. This first issue has been, on a personal level, at least, a steep and forbidding scramble, taken from the genesis of an editorial idea, to the summit, which is represented by the online publication of this, the inaugural issue. The magazine is to become, I hope, a stronghold for the most innovative and experimental poetry. Our self-imposed remit is to offer a

viable publishing platform to writers who lurk in that space found paralleling the saleable 'Mainstream'. Contained in the following pages is an exhibition of a variety of thrilling styles and approaches to artifice with the written word. Also, I seek to publish visual images, whether concrete poems or graphic imagery or something else entirely. This issue is bookended by two visual pieces from William Bulloch, which act as endpapers for the issue as a whole. For now, delve inside, rustle around a bit. Enjoy yourself.

**Adam Hampton
Editor**

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Andrew Taylor

Please only take what you need, think of the trees

Primary expanse
blue angles

studio fragments collage
small numbers

67 67 67

French toast? Yeah!

Through the cut
out toward the bridge

Floorboard freed of paint
heel marked coffee

Hand held stair climb

Cardboard carried downstairs

It's the weekend
coffee

Calor 12kgs Butane
Blue bottle

It's fascinating intellectually

Inland from the river thermal
riding seabird against
the turquoise and white of building

Your order number 69
ink stained fingers

68, order number 68

So Johnny's your current partner?

69? I felt odd walking around shouting that

For the convenience of passengers only

The tea was in China cups
balanced on top of each other
splashing all over the place

These closets are intended
for cabmen fish porters
and workmen idlers are
not permitted to use them

Men employed by farmers
must not cross the main lines
to fetch milk cans

None but company's horses
allowed to drink at this trough

This is a Red Star station

That early morning breakfast
bags of toast on the Manchester
or Liverpool train out of Euston
in the 60s & 70s was a joy

Those coaches were tiny and there
was no room for a first class trolley
so it was all done with trays

28.11.13

Processed cheese
or screenwriting
the inaugural
takes place in an old hall
before the journey
start stocking up
you never know
when you may need
a blanket
or some emergency
food
coffee would be good
but get that
at the services
no sugar
just milk
there is a comfort here
perhaps due
to familiarity
perhaps due to
knowing I'm
homeward bound
the signifiers
drop signs
the glow of
cat's eyes
at the side of the road
confuse momentarily
follow the curve
spray from speeding wagons
as they too
head north
in the dark

Damaged Wares

for Tony Frazer

From town to open country
In less than thirty minutes

a handful of instax
for sale

Sunday morning travel notices
A slash of colour in the magic forest

Long car rides ten out of ten
would nap

Mrs blackbird feels good
to be out in the woods

Already shooting too much in this room
but the light is so nice

It appears that the only temperate time
in this building
is during fall and spring
between the winter radiators
and this summer hell

The thing I love about early morning shoots
is creating something beautiful
before most people are awake

Grab your things
we've come to take you home

Iain Britton

DECOYS

it's about jazz rhythms / the funkiest
androgynous shuffles

it's about negotiating fence posts
ignoring decoys

the shotgun's blast

sometimes i find moths
fluttering in small glass jars

ISLAND PERSPECTIVE

seagulls
dump froth
bamboozle us with their frolicking
they pull back our heads

to the sky we circumnavigate
an island blinded
 by statues

John Seed

From Melancholy Occurrence

In French-alley Goswell-street
last Sunday 26th December 1820
the watchman going his rounds
calling the hour of one
discovered a new-born infant
lying in a corner entirely naked
a few old rags around his head

Caroline Pedder
wife of James Pedder a tailor
of Albert-place in Putney

about noon preparing dinner
some sparks from burning wood
touched her dress unnoticed until

at the corner of the street
entering Woodlands the grocers she
burst into flames

During the rejoicings Thursday evening last

5 November 1807

somebody discharged a musket behind the watch-house

the ball passed through window shutters

on each side of the watch-house

and through the head of Sarah Osborne

fourteen years of age

standing in a shop in Bristol's Horse Fair

then through the windows of the house opposite and

shattered a picture on the wall

On Saturday evening
the body of a female infant was found
in the river Wye at Putson
sewed in a flannel envelope lined with coloured wool
mouth and throat full of ashes

Gordon Gibson

Initial Difficulties

The snaggletooth bootlegger,
Once waggish and rugged,
Now groggy and aggrieved,
Waterlogged, soggy and bedraggled.
Mugged by thuggish skulduggery on a lugger,
His baggage swagged and smuggled.
Still his suggestive giggle is unflagging.
His aggression pegged,
He has jogged to his loggia,
For hugging, snogging
And piggyback jitterbugging,
Jiggling doggedly
With a long-legged veggie.

Chris McCabe

From LIQUID CITY

Are we being mudlarked from the viaducts
 fished from concrete
Liquid City grows on the hosepipe ban
 calculates its timetables
 by the acoustics of the ATM
O Rimbaud Gascoyne Dickens
 all nightwalking chum who slipped the fishhooks
where else would you have gone but here?
 Threadneedle St King William St Mayfair
where people hide from urgency
 wearing brown & black
cravats claypipes pinched sackcloth
 the tides wash against the levelling industries
beer stone vinegar timber
 heartburn & architecture
in Liquid City a quill won't do
 that bucket of water
Dickens dunked his head in for respite
 before writing on
 you have to touch & lift text
on the dérive to the powerstation
 touch & lift text
I've seen men casting hooks above commuters' heads
 a snagged ear is a portent
but fails as bait
 O o O O O o it hears
in the wherrying stream
 these nightwalkers are the fished

touched & lifted into text

And time will give us goiters
dry as turkey wattle
blackouts & astonishments
drillholes in glass the worms bring light
can you see the burials in the skies?
This is where celebrities age from public view
rising in a botox eclipse Stringfellow
like a tigerworm banded by sunbeds
Archer in aquariums of light
after the tides
citadels of sheetmetal & embankments
sweetmeats & accidents
careers ringed in eyeliner
as a record of the years
Liquid City puts a castle
on the elephant's back
paints it red facing the temple
calls it the blacking factory
what was good for Dickens
will be good for us
After Charing X is bumped for Embankment
we ask all the watermen & dredgers
the wharfers & dockers
if when they're done

our imprisoned fathers can come back to us

Liquid City cranks the ribs in its masts
chains them to embankments
creeks a helix to the sewers
 jellyfish & hedgefunders
 entanglements of wing & fin
sails them to Greenwich
 where hulls are burned to superscript
addendum the date adds to data
 and plugs an apple in a gasmask
 names it hogroast
pockmarks the walls of stations
 with shrapnel & drill-chaff
 captions for heritage
pasteurises the details of its residents
 into the commute
and pours them through centuries
 like missing faces on milk flasks
Liquid City drinks itself
 spills itself into underground creeks
 brooks spillways sewers
The Fleet The Neckinger The Effra
 these are my *rivers* it says
Go fuck Hades

Robert Sheppard

The Symboliste Quartet

From Petrarch 3: a derivative derive around 'Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro'

That pitiful morning when the light of Heaven
Was hidden for our mourning maker's sake,
I saw you first that day, My Lady, but
Was captured, disarmed, then bound to your stake...

Petrarch/Baudelaire: A Florentine Vampire in Paris

Amid the rush of All Souls' Eve, the majesty of sadness
(I'd waited 530 years for this translation, this transfusion)
a woman mourned, passing slowly, lifted by the liquefaction
of her clothes; holding fast the stake to my bloated heart.

Like a wobbling lush, not feeling blows or blood,
Under a livid sky of germs I fed off her grace,
statuesque. I wept, drank deep from her softening eyes.
Fascination weakens. Pain kills: pleasure bites.

I've paid in blood but not my own, nor my words.
Love flashed and she flooded, ensanguined and weak:
bleak eternity escaped into the void vessel of her heart.

Ever! There's no living beat in this unloving verse:
O you whom I might have loved if I'd dared not to
flash you my fangs! O you who'd read it all before!

Petrarch/Mallarmé: Pale

for Peter Manson

Tonight, I don't come to capture your body
bearing my sins for the sake of the world; or,
my Beast, to tear up a pitiful storm in your fuzz,
from the incurable *ennui* I drop with the kiss of my verse;

I demand of your bed dreamless sleep armoured against
crepuscular amours, clouded in the curtains of unknowing;
so you'll taste your own black lies, the batters and blues,
you who know more about *le néant* than the dead.

Le Vice stalked me, gobbled me, sucked out my grace;
impaled, like you, sterile tears unflowing,
while your stone breast is dressed to kill whose

heart no glistening fang of crime unblesses,
I run, run down, haunted by my shroud,
afraid of dying in my sleep, in the poem, alone.

Petrarch/Rimbaud: Vow

A black, E blank, U LAUrA, I another, O Heaven,
this last morning I'll tell of the vowels' latent spawnings;
A, black velveteen corset of flies captivates,
blusters and clusters over the cruel stench,

A pit of shit; E, spears and shields, the filigree
of glacial lace caught in my throat, an arrow-hook;
I, blood-spit and anger, laughing beauty,
I is a letter swept along the scarlet boulevard;

U, divine vibrations through viridian seas,
animal lusts flowing, alchemical sorrows
stitched into hardened arteries to derange me;

O, trumpet full of strange triumphs, blowing to bits
the silence of angels and cupids around the globe:
O, Omega, catch the violent dart of her azure eyes.

Petrarch/Verlaine: Lux! and Fux!

Flesh! under Heaven's dark light the sole fruit we bite,
Sweet and sour, juicing our teeth, My Lady; my soul
Hungry solely for Love, saw you just once and, gripped
By the throat, in the mouth your tart tart choked me,

Love! the sole emotion of those who weep not
At the world's dread. Love's stones grind and mill
The arrows of the rude, the shields of the prude, into hard
Wafer, my joy this Witching Hour, my woe this Eastertide.

Love, pretty shepherd boy in a pissed peasant's dream,
Hherded me into a pastoral free of animal lusts, free
Of tears, but full of vile sweet white wine, unchilled!

Flesh is the peasant dreaming feebly that triumph
Will strangle the triumphant – this Holy Day or not.
Why let ecstasy's darts fall short, Love and Flesh?

Sydney McNeill

me, the love-struck millennial

smokestack hobbies
seeping social context
embody the sorceress, strong
in ways your mother wasn't
take the words and overflow, the
way your lover says the sentence
 with the seasons, revolutions so
 saturated there are only metaphors
your heart is moonlit rural
alberta, coyote paws
 etched carefully in powder snow, the
 way the leaving felt

Tom Jenks

From Bonnets

xv.

Like King Offa getting ripped at the jazz funk disco,
like a fire breathing goose in a universe of ducks,
like high-fructose syrup, like a super-sized dog,
like matchstick models of provincial cathedrals.

She carries a cucumber into the igloo.

Her hair smells lightly of gravy and musk.

We found success in a suburb of Watford,
turning up the heat in the wax museum,
working part time as a human bull,
semi-conscious with a lady's glass.

I am Rodney Bingenheimer, a Disney character.

I am Ivan Drago, an aromatherapist.

There is nothing wrong with occasional herrings.

Check out my Myspace for high res pictures.

xxxiii.

Wheatmeal gave me back my zest for life,
leaving the cubicle without a backward glance,
letting go of shame in Seaford, East Sussex,
the planets aligned in Stoke on Trent.

I took a mushroom-identification lesson.

I placed a bar of soap in the microwave.

Six small elves with a selfie stick
sway imperceptibly in the yogurt aisle.

The gingerbread tree was won by Brian,

locally grown with crooked lightning.

A growing menace threatens the Republic,
the naughtiest girls in glasses you've ever seen.

In Julius Caesar vs Frankenstein

we'd wake at 7.30 for breakfast at 8.

xxxvii.

Orange is the colour of my true love's hair,
deeply resonant, obtained by mixing
sweet potato, melon and pumpkin.

In ancient China, a female vampire
is woefully miscast, a ruined prodigy,
centre of the life force, lost in Colchester.

Guillaume Apollinaire looks half his age
in red and white top and tiny shorts,
newly single, frolicking in the surf.

Mark Wahlberg rises early to dress a lobster.

Dolph Lundgren crystallises seven times a day,
on trend in Aspen, fluent in hexadecimal.

Last night, I dreamed of a clockwork turtle.

What does this mean in 2006?

xxxviii.

Bring me my bones of Juju snake,
bring me my powder, my headdress of feathers,
bring me my snood, my fascinator,
bring me my ultimate macaroons.

Fog bound in the Ottoman Empire,
living alone with a time lapsed orchid,
beguiled by stars with a sugared rim,
logged on with a Chicken Legend.

I am technically the god of chaos.

I could so blow this Popsicle stand.

I'm nuts about dogs and Korean moon bears.

I'd drive all night just to get back home.

Every Friday we bust out the fondue.

This will be one big Kleenex Moment.

Luke Thurogood

HISTORY

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- - -

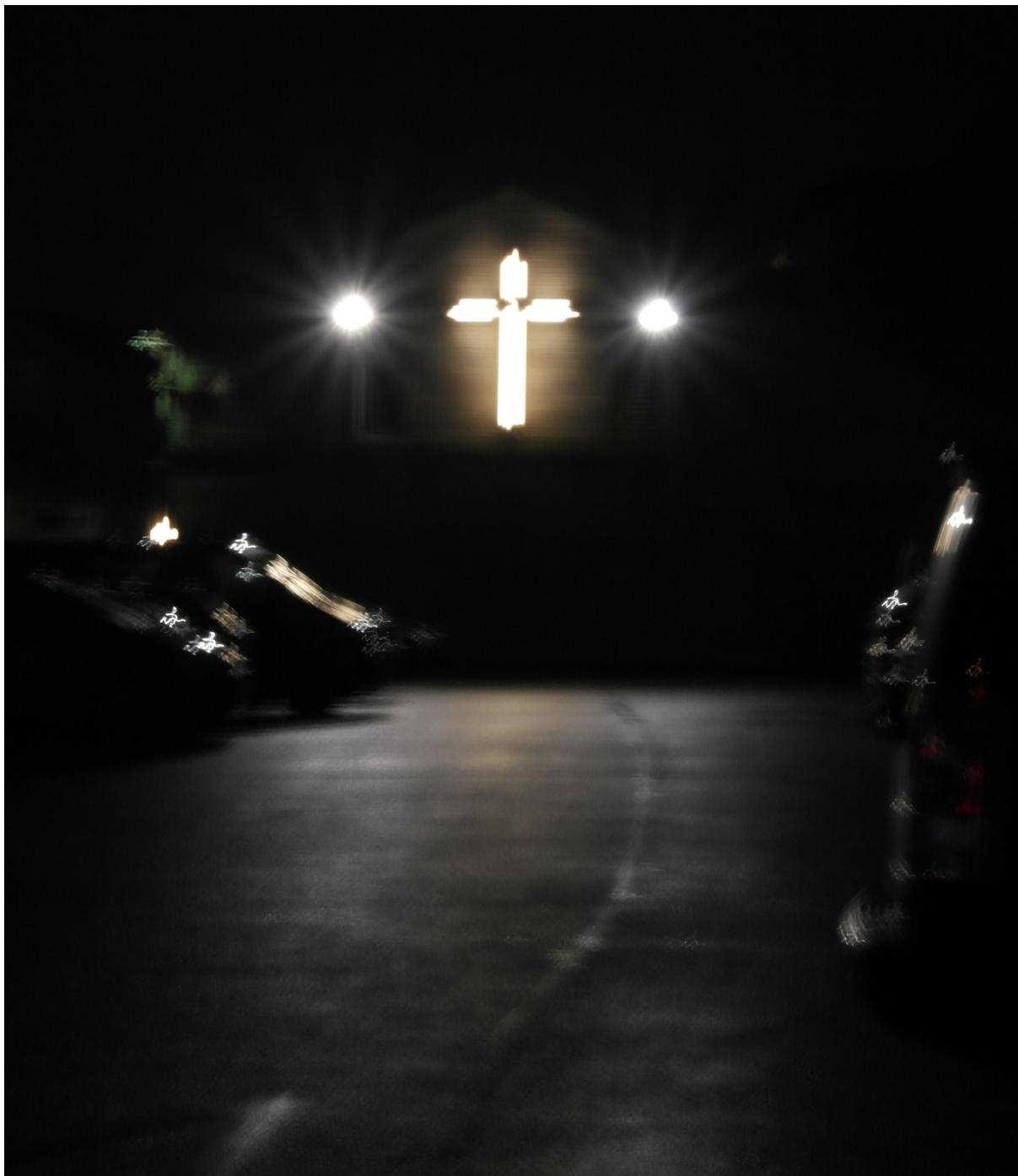
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'For Those in Peril on the Sea'

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William Bulloch is an artist, poet and photographer. He is currently studying towards the final year in a degree in Creative Writing at Edge Hill University. In a former life, William had a career as a creative designer for the NHS.

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Andrew Taylor is a Nottingham based poet, editor and critic. His debut collection of poetry, *Radio Mast Horizon* was published in 2013 by Shearsman Books. His latest pamphlet, *Future Dust* was published in 2015. He is currently working on his second full collection for Shearsman. Poems have appeared in *Stride*, *Pages*, *The Morning Star* and *Poetry Wales* amongst other places. He is an editor at *erbacce*, *erbacce*-Press and *M58*, a blogzine of other poetries. He is lecturer in Creative Writing and English at Nottingham Trent University. www.andrewtaylorpoetry.com

Iain Britton

Since 2008, Iain Britton has had five collections of poems published. *Hauled Head First into a Leviathan*, from Cinnamon Press, was nominated for Best First Collection category in the Forward Poetry Prize. Further UK books followed, with work included in the *Shearcatcher Poetry Anthology* published by Shearsman Books, 2012. A new collection of poems *Photosynthesis* was published by Kilmog Press in 2014.

John Seed

John Seed is the author of ten collections of verse, most recently *Smoke Rising: London 1940-41* (Shearsman, 2015), and *Some Poems, 2006-12* (Gratton Street Irregulars, 2014). His early poetry featured in the anthology *A Various Art*, from Carcanet in 1987. He has also written a lot of history, a book on Marx and essays on the poetry of Basil Bunting, George Oppen and Bill Griffiths.

Gordon Gibson

Gordon Gibson lives on the south-west coast of Scotland. He has been writing full-time for the last four years, after a career in higher education. His writing, both prose and poetry, has appeared in a number of print and on-line publications.

Chris McCabe

Chris McCabe was born in Liverpool in 1977. His latest collection *Speculatrix* was published in 2014 by Penned in the Margins. He has had three other collections of poetry published: *The Hutton Inquiry*, *Zeppelins*, and *The Restructure*. He was shortlisted for the 2014 Ted Hughes Award for the collaborative collection *Pharmapoetica*, written alongside artist Maria Vloutides. He currently works as the Poetry Librarian at the Poetry Library, London.

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Robert Sheppard is Professor of Poetry and Poetics at Edge Hill University, where he also the Programme Leader for the Creative Writing MA. He edits *Pages*, a blogzine for innovative poetry and poetics. He has three new publications currently available, *History or Sleep*, *Selected Poems* from Shearsman, *The Drop* from Oystercatcher Press and *Unfinish* from Veer Books.

Sydney McNeill

Sydney McNeill is a feminist poet from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada who writes because she can't not. She does her best to capture the small moments that slip through everyone's fingertips all the time. Further work can be found at www.sydneymcneillwrites.com.

Tom Jenks

Tom Jenks has published ten books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Spruce* (Blart Books). He was featured in the anthology *The Best British Poetry 2015*, published by Salt. He also co-organises 'The Other Room' reading series and website and administers the avant objects imprint zimZalla. He is a PhD student at Edge Hill University. More at <http://zshboo.org>

Luke Thurogood

Luke Thurogood is a poet, performance poet, editor, radio host, filmmaker and awful musician. He enjoys badminton and football. He has performed poetry at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool and has a publication forthcoming with Knives Forks and Spoons Press. He is editor of *Black Market Re-View* and *Three and a half point 9*.

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